

## PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC)



The Cascade Mountain Range from the Snoqualmie River in Monroe.

The Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) area of responsibility is the four-county area comprising the Central Puget Sound region. These counties include King, Kitsap,\* Snohomish, and Pierce, totaling 6,287 square miles. The region is located between the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges and is bisected by Puget Sound. Largely surrounded by mountains and water, the region is further restricted by steep hills, numerous rivers and lakes, and other environmentally sensitive areas. The PSRC is also the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as designated by the governor to administer the federally required transportation planning process for a metropolitan area with a population of 50,000 or more.



State Route 16 - Tacoma Narrows Bridge

### *Major Transportation Facilities:*

As the Central Puget Sound region is both the most populous and economically active area in Washington, there are numerous transportation facilities of considerable importance. Running in both north-south and east-west directions are Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific rail lines carrying freight and passenger traffic. There are five local transit operators (King County – Metro; Kitsap County – Kitsap County Transit; Pierce County - Pierce County Transit; Snohomish County - Community Transit, also Everett Transit;) and one regional transit operator, Sound Transit. Sound Transit serves King, Pierce and

Snohomish counties, but not Kitsap County. Within the four-county area connecting the west and east sides of Puget Sound are a total of six ferry routes, two of which provide faster passenger-only ferry connections. SeaTac International Airport is a major aviation facility connecting the state to other national and international cities.

The highway system has many state routes of vital importance to both person and freight movement. Interstate 5, which bisects Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties, provides a critical north-south link to Canada and the Southwestern United States and Mexico. Interstate 90

\* Note: Kitsap County is a member of both PSRC and the Peninsula RTPO. Located between the Olympic Peninsula and the metropolitan Central Puget Sound region, Kitsap County provides a significant access corridor between these two areas. Additionally, many Kitsap residents who commute to the Seattle metropolitan area are affected by PSRC's transportation planning.

provides the same essential highway connection to the eastern destinations. Interstate 405, originally constructed as a bypass for I-5, is now the major state highway serving all the growing jurisdictions east of Lake Washington (Bellevue, Renton, Kirkland, Redmond, etc.) and a significant amount of regional travel. There are also a large number of state-owned principal arterial roadways that are critical to the movement of people and freight in the region. Some of the most important include SR 16/SR 3 in Pierce and Kitsap Counties, SR 167 in King and Pierce Counties, SR 520, SR 99 and SR18 in King County, SR 522 in King and Snohomish Counties, and US 2 in Snohomish County.

#### *Demographics:*

Between 1960 and 2000, the region's population increased from 1.5 million to 3.2 million. More than half the population gain during this period (56 percent) was accounted for by net migration into the

region. King County has the largest population in the four-county area and almost 30 percent of Washington's population. The region itself has almost 56 percent of the state's population located on only 9.45 percent of the state's area.

	Population (2000)	Persons Per Square Mile	Median Household Income (1997)
Washington State:	5,894,121	88.6	\$41,715
King County:	1,737,034	817.0	\$51,300
Kitsap County:	231,969	585.8	\$43,492
Pierce County:	700,820	417.4	\$41,853
Snohomish County:	606,024	290.1	\$49,439

The major regional center and also the largest city in Washington is Seattle, located in the central portion of King County. There are four additional metropolitan centers, one in each of the four counties. They are Bremerton to the west in Kitsap County, Everett to the north in Snohomish County, Bellevue to the east in King County, and Tacoma to the south in Pierce County.

Approximately 35 percent of the resident population lives in unincorporated areas; however, incorporation of the more densely populated portions of counties has been an emerging trend. Since 1990, 13 new cities have been formed and numerous annexations have occurred in the region, adding more than half a million people to cities and towns.

#### **PSRC Freight Facts:**

- More than 65% of the freight truck trips originating from this region have destinations within Western Washington.
- More than 3,000 truck trips per day originate from Seattle.

*Eastern Washington Intermodal Transportation Survey November 1995*

#### *Freight Movement:*

The Puget Sound region is a major North American gateway for trade with Pacific Rim countries. The region is also the heart of the state's trade infrastructure and is the cornerstone of our state's economic prosperity. In this region, freight movement will be a pivotal factor in our ability to stay competitive in the international marketplace. Without an efficient freight system, this region's economy and Washington's economy will falter, as competitive-minded corporations shift their

manufacturing centers and transportation routes to other states with better facilities.

The Central Puget Sound region is not just a pass through stop for freight movement to or from the Pacific Rim countries. There is also a significant amount of locally grown and manufactured produce and goods that are carried to suppliers in other areas of the country. The Green River Valley in South King County and the North Duwamish industrial and manufacturing area in South Seattle are two vital freight movement locations. In addition, the ability of the Boeing

Company to stay competitive in this area rests heavily on the region's ability to move its manufactured airplane parts to other areas of the country.

*Truck Freight* — Roughly 65 percent of truck trips originating in this region are destined to stay in Western Washington. Approximately, 25 percent of truck trips originating from the region are headed out of state and another 11 percent are intended for Eastern Washington destinations. Many of those trips are empty container trips hauled back from Puget Sound port facilities to agricultural related facilities in Yakima, Ellensburg and Wenatchee.

*Rail Freight* — The types of freight transported on rail in the PSRC region are: intermodal trailers and containers, grain, manufactured goods and merchandise, and lumber and lumber products. Puget Sound is increasingly becoming dominated by containerized cargo shipment. Container freight movement is increasing, especially by rail for destinations beyond the Rocky Mountains. Container freight volume has grown to a level that now exceeds high weight cargo, such as grain and logs combined, and should continue to dominate Puget Sound traffic through 2020.

Railroad lines serving this region are: Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Tacoma Rail Mountain Division, Tacoma Rail, Ballard Terminal and Meeker Southern. Amtrak and Sound Transit provide passenger service.

*Water Freight* — The Central Puget Sound's ports of Seattle and Tacoma together form one of the top three containerized cargo load centers in the Western Hemisphere. The majority of international waterborne cargo traffic shipped through Puget Sound ports has, historically, consisted of exports. Due primarily to decreases in forest products exports and increases in imported crude oil, however, the gap between imports and exports has been narrowing. Year 2000 import statistics were projected to exceed exports by a small margin. By the year 2020 imports are forecast to exceed exports by more than 22 percent. Domestic container traffic (in the Alaska and Hawaii trades) accounted for 27.1 percent of the TEUs (TEU – Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit, a common denominator for varying lengths of containers used in maritime transportation) moved through Seattle and Tacoma in 1997. International container traffic levels for Seattle and Tacoma are forecast to grow 4.3 percent per year from 1998 to 2020, while domestic trade is forecast to grow 1.5 percent per year for that same period.

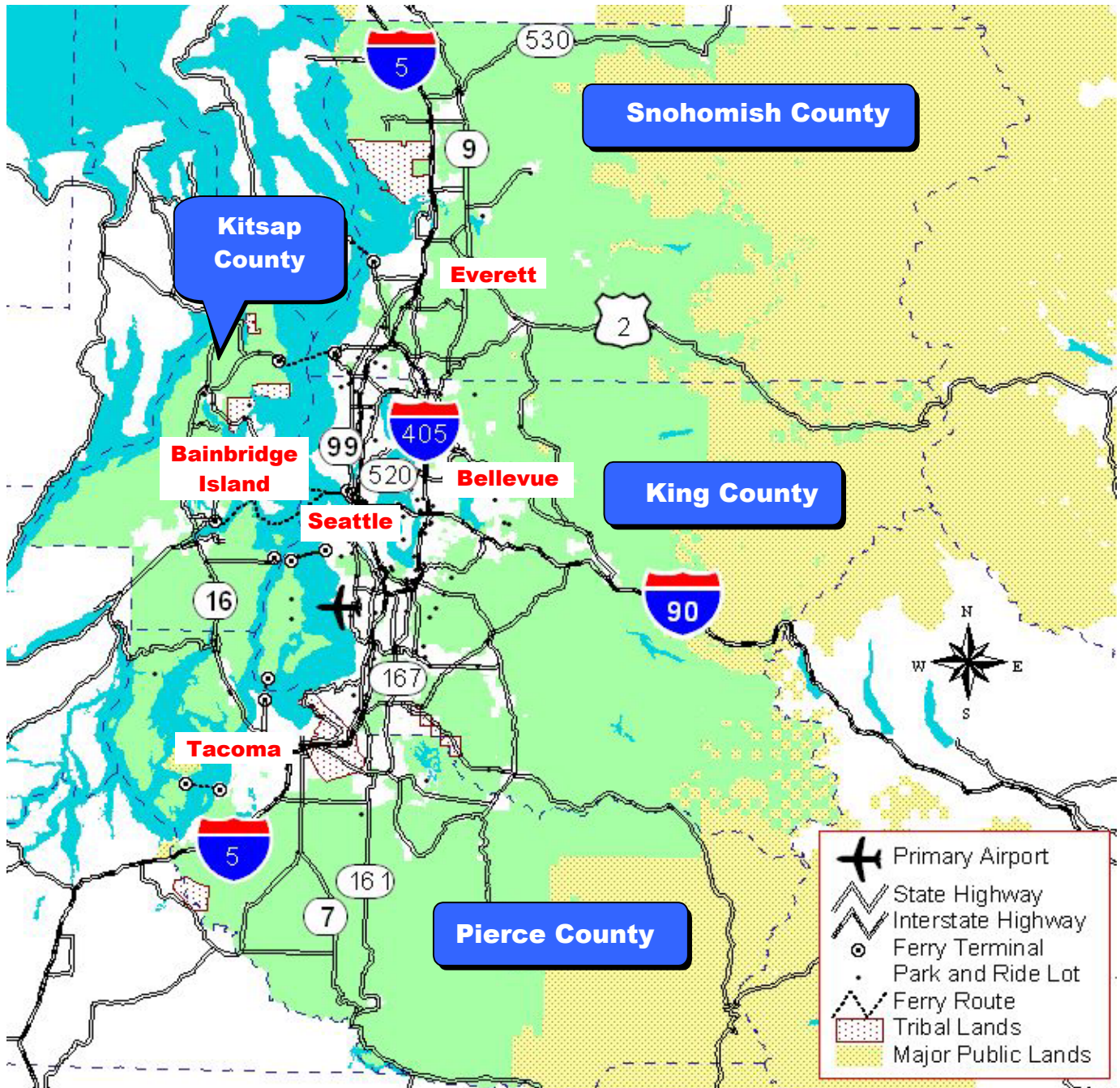
#### *Economic Trends:*

Today the region has an employment base of 1.9 million jobs. The region's economic base evolved from manufacturing-dominated industries, including a strong aerospace sector following World War II, to a growth of the services sector, especially the high-technology industry in the 1990s. The employment base in the Central Puget Sound region has more than doubled in the past 30 years. Job growth has been a primary driver in the region's population growth. By the year 2030, the Central Puget Sound region is expected to accommodate a population of 4.7 million people and 2.6 million jobs.

Between 1995 and 1998, the region experienced what was perhaps the most richly diverse job growth in history. During this period, the region's job growth soared by about 215,000 jobs at an annual average growth rate of 3.8 percent. This figure eclipsed the national average, also considered strong, of 2.3 percent annual average job growth. The trends that emerged from this job growth influence land use and other regional dynamics and impact the region's economic, growth management, and transportation plans.

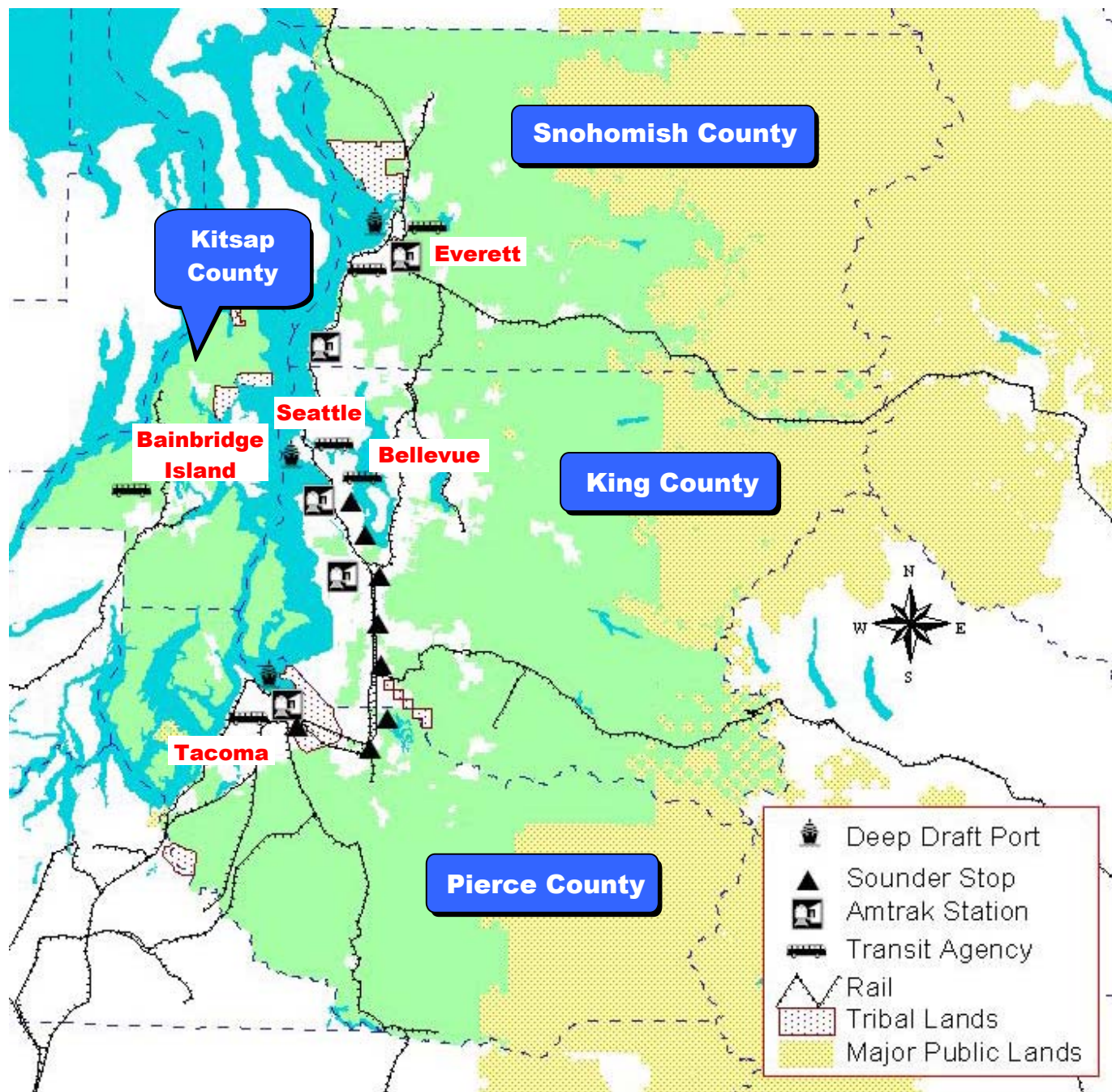


## PSRC Highways, Ferries and Airports





## PSRC Rail, Ports and Transit



### Transportation Priorities:

In the Central Puget Sound region, the transportation challenges are numerous, complex, and fraught with controversy. Consensus has yet to be established within the region on what should be done to address the problems and which problems should be addressed first. However, the Puget Sound Regional Council has recently updated its metropolitan transportation plan known as *Destination 2030*, extending it to a 30-year horizon, and essentially “prioritizing” projects into one of the three decades encompassed by the plan. All modes of transportation are addressed in the document.



Washington State Ferries at Colman Dock in Seattle

In *Destination 2030*, decreasing the reliance on the single occupant vehicle and increasing the usage of other modes of transportation including transit, car/vanpools, bicycling, and walking is a high priority. However, the plan does reflect a balanced approach to dealing with congestion and includes numerous general purpose roadway improvements on both the state and local systems. The following are some of the critical needs expected to be addressed during the first 10 years of the plan:

- Recognizing congestion as one of the greatest concerns facing the region, voters approved a transportation program known as “Sound Move” in the late 1990s. Sound Transit is a public transit agency designed to deliver a mix of rail (Sounder Commuter Trains), regional bus routes (ST Express Buses) and new facilities (Link Light Rail). The most expensive element is the currently proposed light rail line from Downtown Seattle to a South 154<sup>th</sup> Street terminus — approximately 1 mile north of SeaTac International Airport. The proposed light rail alignment runs parallel to I-5 and has been viewed as one component to addressing congestion on that crowded I-5 interstate freeway. The program has experienced some recent problems, limiting the length of the first phase, but building the light rail component is still a high priority for many people.
- Completing the Puget Sound Core High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) system (Pierce County, South King County, and Snohomish County) is both a high regional priority and one of WSDOT’s highest priorities. Some of the most expensive pieces of the core system have not yet started — including the segment through Tacoma in Pierce County and through Everett in Snohomish County.



Bremerton Transportation Center



- Increasing both capital and operational expenditures for additional transit service is a high regional transportation priority. Adding new general purpose capacity to our highways is also a large part of the solution, but highway expansion alone will not result in a sustainable, long-term solution. Additional transit service must be a component of the solution. Using all the transportation tools available in a multiple mode strategy is likely to show the greatest benefit.
- Additional ferry service between Kitsap/Island Counties and King/Snohomish Counties is needed as demand is exceeding WSDOT's ability to provide this service. Associated with increased ferry service is the relocation and expansion of ferry terminals in Mukilteo and Edmonds, both in Snohomish County. These improvements are needed in order to keep pace with the increased demand for ferry service and to minimize the disruption ferry traffic causes to these two communities. Increasing the number of passenger-only ferries and ferry routes is also a desired goal.
- Recently Seattle area voters approved funding to study the extension of the Seattle Monorail, which currently provides service between the Seattle Center and downtown Seattle. The Elevated Transportation Company has been formed to facilitate this study. Once a preliminary preferred alternative and associated costs have been developed, the proposal will be sent back to the voters to determine their support.

**PSRC Needs**  
**Congestion Management projects:**

**State-Interest Facilities**

<b>Transit</b>	<b>\$11,737.9 million</b>
<b>Transportation Demand Management</b>	<b>\$1,460.0 million</b>
<b>Bike &amp; Pedestrian</b>	<b>\$79.4 million</b>



Puget Sound from Lincoln Park  
in West Seattle

Our recent economic prosperity presents challenges, generating transportation conflicts of all kinds. Traffic congestion around our ports causes delay for truckers, while growth in train traffic — including intercity passenger and commuter trains — strains our rail capacity and creates conflicts with local traffic at railroad crossings. Highway congestion has led to delays in the movement of freight through the region. In addition to congestion on highways, existing rail lines are also reaching capacity. Freight rail is now being asked to share rail lines with passenger trains, exacerbating the situation. Several efforts are underway to help address this growing problem including:

- Adding additional rail capacity in several strategic areas between Tacoma and Everett to allow freight and passenger rail to more comfortably coexist within the rail corridor.
- Implementation of the Freight Action Strategy (FAST) for the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma corridor. This program has targeted specific high-volume, at-grade highway/railroad crossings for grade separation projects. One such project at the Port of Tacoma has been completed and several others are currently under construction.

**PSRC Needs**  
**Freight Movement projects:**

<b>State Highways</b>	<b>\$642.3 million</b>
<b>Ferries</b>	<b>\$698.4 million</b>

While a primary regional strategy is to reduce reliance on the single occupant vehicle, *Destination 2030* does reflect a balanced approach to dealing with congestion. The targeted capacity expansion of general purpose highway lanes remains a priority in this region, both for state-owned highways and locally-owned roads. There are numerous state highways in the region in need of capacity improvements. Some of the most critical needs and their associated improvement strategies are:

#### In King County:

- I-405 (Tukwila to Lynnwood) – An Environmental Impact Statement is nearing completion that will likely propose widening this highway by two additional lanes in each direction. Associated with this improvement are a bus rapid transit component and numerous local roadway improvements.
- SR 520 (Seattle to Redmond) – A study is currently underway to determine the best mix of transportation improvements for this congested state highway corridor. The current Evergreen Point Bridge is highly congested and in need of replacement as it nears the end of its designated lifespan.



I-5 Northbound at Roanoke Street in Seattle



SR 520 at 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE in Bellevue

- SR 509 extension (missing link) – Constructing a six-lane extension of SR 509 in South King County is a priority. This will provide access to SeaTac International Airport from the south; provide some freight access to other Port of Seattle facilities and industrial areas in South King County; and provide some relief for congested I-5. Environmental planning work is nearing completion.
- SR 99 (including the Alaska Way Viaduct) – SR 99 provides a parallel route to I-5 throughout King County and South Snohomish County. Most of the local jurisdictions for which this route serves as one of their city streets have plans to make capacity improvements, with several currently under construction (Sea Tac and Lynnwood). One consequence of the February 2001 earthquake was a heightened awareness of the vulnerability of the Alaska Way Viaduct that traverses downtown Seattle. A study is currently underway to develop a preferred alternative for replacing this aging structure.
- SR 518 (I-5 to SR 509) – SR 518 provides the only current state highway link to SeaTac International Airport. It is also an extension of I-405 west of I-5. As such, this is a very

#### **PSRC Needs Congestion Management projects:**

<b>State Highways</b>	<b>– \$23,605.5 million</b>
<b>Ferries</b>	<b>– \$3,202.8 million</b>



important highway for regional movement. A study is currently underway to develop a preliminary improvement plan for the route.

#### **In Snohomish County:**

- US 2 Trestle Bridge – In Snohomish County there is a lack of reliable east-west highway connections. This is mainly due to geographic and environmental constraints. One of the principal existing east-west connections is US 2, which connects the Everett urban area with the bedroom communities of Lake Stevens, Snohomish, and Monroe. The critical link within this segment of highway is the trestle bridge that spans the Snohomish River and the Ebey Slough between Everett and Lake Stevens. Long range plans call for adding capacity to the US 2 trestle bridge. The determination has not yet been finalized whether this would be additional general purpose capacity or HOV lanes.
- SR 522 (Woodinville to Monroe) – This two-lane state highway connects Woodinville in King County with Monroe in Snohomish County. It serves much the same purpose as US 2, in that it provides a direct connection between the bedroom communities of Monroe, Startup, and Goldbar with the Seattle urban area. This segment of highway is not only congested, it has also become a notorious safety concern as traffic has increased over the years. The solution is to widen the highway, provide grade separated interchanges, and a wide median separating opposing directions of travel. The first phase of this widening was recently completed. Funding levels will dictate when the remaining phases can be completed.
- I-5 through Everett – The segment of I-5 between Shoreline in King County and Everett in Snohomish County is one of the most congested segments of highway in the state. The Core HOV system, mentioned above, has its northern terminus at US 2 in Everett. During construction of this Core HOV segment, the interchanges serving the City of Everett will need to be reconstructed and other improvements will need to be made as well. While a good deal of planning and preliminary engineering work has occurred, construction of these improvements is still several years away. Ultimately, HOV lanes will be extended to SR 528 in Marysville.

#### **In Pierce County:**

- SR 167 extension (Puyallup to Tacoma missing link) – SR 167 is a major freeway connecting North Pierce County with South King County. One existing segment of this route between Puyallup and Tacoma takes the form of a surface arterial with at-grade intersections regulated by traffic signals. This configuration is inconsistent with the primary function of this highway: to serve interregional and interstate travel. An Environmental Impact Statement is currently in the final stages of development for this segment of SR 167. The preferred alternative is a six-lane freeway connecting Puyallup with Tacoma and an extension of this freeway into the Port of Tacoma on the north side of I-5. Completion of this transportation missing link should help relieve some of the congestion now present on I-5.
- SR 16 (including the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) – SR 16 provides a critical land-based link from Pierce County to Kitsap County and much of the route has become unacceptably congested. In the absence of this connection, Kitsap County's link to the rest of the Central Puget Sound region is through the use of the Washington State Ferry System. SR 16 as far north as Gig Harbor is included in the Puget Sound Core HOV System. In response to heavy congestion, plans have been developed to widen the existing highway for HOV lanes and to construct a new bridge connection across the Tacoma Narrows.

**In Kitsap County**

- **SR 304 (Gateway project in Bremerton)** – SR 304 is the main state highway access into downtown Bremerton and the Bremerton Ferry Terminal from Pierce and South Kitsap County. In partnership, the City and WSDOT have been reconstructing this state highway segment to both reduce congestion and to improve safety. Two phases of this three-phase project have been completed.
- **SR 305 (through Poulsbo)** – SR 305 is the main state highway connection between Bainbridge Island and Poulsbo. It is also the primary connection for freight moved by ferry to and from the Olympic Peninsula. Along this 13-mile highway, the most congested segment in need of improvement is within the Poulsbo urban area. An environmental impact statement is near completion that will propose the highway be widened one additional lane in each direction with the new lane also being used as a peak hour HOV-only lane.

**Members:** Counties: *King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish;*

Cities: *Algona, Arlington, Auburn, Bainbridge Island, Beaux Arts Village, Bellevue, Bonney Lake, Bothell, Bremerton, Buckley, Burien, Clyde Hill, Covington, DuPont, Duvall, Eatonville, Edgewood, Edmonds, Enumclaw, Everett, Federal Way, Fife, Fircrest, Gig Harbor, Hunts Point, Issaquah, Kenmore, Kent, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park, Lake Stevens, Lakewood, Lynnwood, Maple Valley, Marysville, Medina, Mercer Island, Mill Creek, Milton, Monroe, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo, Newcastle, North Bend, Orting, Pacific, Port Orchard, Poulsbo, Puyallup, Redmond, Renton, Ruston, Sammamish, SeaTac, Seattle, Shoreline, Skykomish, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Stanwood, Steilacoom, Sultan, Sumner, Tacoma, Tukwila, University Place, Woodinville, Woodway, and Yarrow Point;*

Transit Agencies: *Community Transit, Everett Transportation Service, Kitsap Transit, Metropolitan King County, Pierce Transit, and Sound Transit;*

Ports: *Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma;*

State Agency: *WSDOT;*

Associate Members: *Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, Island County, Port of Bremerton, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Thurston Regional Planning Council, and The Tulalip Tribes*

**PSRC Transportation Facts:**

- Between 1980 and 1990 the population of women age 16 and over who worked outside the home increased 60% to 68%.
- Between 1970 and 1990 population grew 60%, while registered vehicles increased 131%.
- With no congestion, a 60-minute trip in the PSRC metro area would take 60 minutes. Based on current conditions it takes 99 minutes. If nothing is done to change this, it will take 116 minutes to make the same trip in 2022.
- The average driver in the Seattle area spends more than twice as much time stuck in congestion today as they did in 1982 — 26 hours in 1982 versus 56 hours today.
- King County Metro currently has 818 vanpools in operation and plans to increase by 221 vans.
- Kitsap Transit currently has 65 vanpools in operation.
- Community Transit in Snohomish County currently has 271 vanpools in operation.
- Pierce Transit currently has 192 vanpools in operation.